

PHARMACY AND POISONS BILL

COMMITTEE STAGE ENDED

An assurance that the Pharmacy and Poisons Bill would not restrict the sale of a large number of substances was given by Mr. Douglas Hacking, Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Home Office, when the House of Commons Standing Committee, presided over by Sir Ian Macpherson, resumed consideration of the Bill yesterday.

Part 2 of the Bill, Mr. HACKING said, definitely helped the sale of poisons by people who in the past had not been able to sell them.

Mr. WATT (Keighley, U.) moved an amendment which, he said, would have the effect of using the word "poisonous" instead of "poison" as a label. The word poison might suggest suicide to certain people.

Mr. GLOSSOP (Penistone, U.), supporting the amendment, said: "Not only do you put people off buying articles which contain a minute amount of poison if you label a thing 'poison.' It also suggests things to people of suicidal or criminal intent."

Mr. HACKING pointed out that if the Bill became law it would be possible to label a bottle "poisonous."

The amendment was withdrawn.

Replying to a further amendment by Mr. GLOSSOP, Mr. HACKING said that the effect would be that no poison could be sold unless the purchaser was known to the chemist. There was a preparation which was a very potent poison indeed, but was an effective specific against seasickness. "Can you imagine my hon. friend going to Victoria and suddenly realizing that the Channel would be rough. He goes to the chemist in a terrible hurry and finds that the chemist cannot hand him the preparation."

Mr. GLOSSOP.—As I am taking a sea voyage shortly, I beg leave to withdraw the amendment.

Mr. HACKING resisted an amendment which would increase the number of persons on the Poisons Board set up under the Bill from 16 to 18. The amendment was designed to enable representatives of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and of the manufacturing chemists to be appointed to the board. Mr. Hacking gave an undertaking that the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons would be consulted before any rules were made. The Association of British Chemical Manufacturers, he said, had informed him that they did not desire representation. The draft orders under the Act would be sent to the association for consideration.

The clause was carried by 30 votes to nine.

The Committee stage was concluded and the Bill as amended was ordered to be reported to the House.

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The Times (London, England), Friday, May 12, 1933; pg. 8; Issue 46442. (414 words)

Category: News

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Gale Document Number:CS134949036